

October 15, 2009

Environmental Management Support, Inc.  
Attn: Mr. Don West  
8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 500  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms. Deborah Orr  
EPA Region V  
77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

Dear Mr. West and Ms. Orr:

The City of Rockford, Illinois, is pleased to submit our application to the USEPA for a \$ 400,000 Community-Wide Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant. This grant application targets Brownfield Sites in and near Downtown Rockford, especially the economically distressed area immediately south and west from Downtown, and former gas station sites along major transportation corridors. Numerous vacant industrial structures of all sizes, some over 12 stories high, and large tracts of vacant industrial land are still found in and near Downtown. These structures and sites are very detrimental to the core of our City and seriously frustrate our Downtown revitalization efforts.

Rockford has been experiencing a seriously high unemployment rate since the economic downturn started in the fall of 2008. Rockford's current unemployment is 16.9%, the third highest of the 99 Cities and Villages in the State of Illinois. The Rockford, IL Metropolitan Statistical Area has a 15.1% unemployment rate, 15<sup>th</sup> highest in the Nation among the 372 major metropolitan areas. The area's economic decline has been sustained for nearly three decades, mainly due to Rockford's long-standing manufacturing base. Rockford had experienced 25% unemployment in 1982, the highest of any City in the Nation. This 1980s recession caused several major plant closings in Rockford. Among these were Barber Colman, National Lock, Quaker Oats, Greenlee -Textron and the Amerock plant on South Main Street. Of these five major plants, only the Barber Colman site is currently being cleaned up. The others sit vacant or severely underutilized in a state of deteriorating limbo for over two decades. Adding to this Brownfields total are recent plant closings that have made our local economy and unemployment situation even worse. Recently closed sites include Amerock on Auburn Street, Counselor Scale, the Tapco building and Ingersoll on S. Water Street. These major Brownfield sites are but a few of the vacant industrial buildings and vacant former industrial sites that are increasing in number due to the current recession. Unfortunately our community has a disproportionately high number of Brownfield sites, most of which have not been fully assessed. Major Brownfield sites are being produced far more quickly than they can be assessed, acquired by the City, cleaned-up and redeveloped.

Each major plant closing or severe reduction in workers had a ripple effect that put many small manufacturers out of business. We now estimate a total of 125 industrial Brownfield sites totaling 675 acres within the City of Rockford, 200 former gas station sites totaling 75 acres and 50 other potentially contaminated small commercial sites (such as dry cleaners) for a total of 375 Brownfield sites on 775 acres, over one square mile. These estimates are based on the River Edge Zone application and Desktop Phase I s performed for 3 major corridors and for areas within a one-mile radius of Downtown. Among these Brownfield sites are several large industrial concentrations along the Rock River and along current and former rail corridors. Modern manufacturing is no longer in need of

riverfront locations, and Brownfield sites along rail corridors are often too limited in size to be easily assembled for redevelopment. Our riverfront and our current and former rail corridors have a long industrial past, but we now desire to redevelop these areas into residential, commercial and recreational uses. Of special importance is the fact that AMTRAK service is to be reinstated into the CN Rail corridor in an area that is in serious need of Brownfields assessment. The previous AMTRAK station at South Main Street has sat idle since 1982, when AMTRAK service was discontinued. This station and other deteriorated structures nearby need to be demolished and the area surrounding the station needs environmental assessments because of previous factories and foundries that were located there.

We have targeted 9 Brownfield clusters, 7 of which have Rock River locations and 7 that include current or former rail lines. These are areas where we can breathe new life into our community; with these grant funds being the catalyst for redevelopment including jobs, retail services, residences and open space/pathways. At this time, the City of Rockford has no Assessment Grant funds available. The very last of the City's Assessment Grant funds were recently expended at the Tapco site at the south edge of Downtown. The need for additional Assessment funding has never been greater for Rockford.

**Applicant Identification:** City of Rockford, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois, 61104

**Funding Requested:**

1. Grant Type: Assessment
2. Federal Funds Requested \$400, 000
3. Contamination:\$200,000 Hazardous Substances and \$200,000 Petroleum
4. Community-Wide Assessment Grant

**Location:** City of Rockford, Winnebago County, State of Illinois

**Project Director:** Wayne Dust, AICP, Planning Administrator  
425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois 61104  
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**Chief Executive:** Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey  
425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois 61104  
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Email: christine.washington@rockfordil.gov

**Date Submitted:** October 16, 2009

**Project Period:** October 2010 – September 2013

**Population:** 150,115 (2000 Census)

Very truly yours,

Lawrence J. Morrissey  
Mayor, City of Rockford